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REPEAT OFFENDER AND DRUG DEALER FROM PUTNAM COUNTY SENTENCED TO LIFE IN FEDERAL PRISON

Jacksonville, Florida - U.S. Attorney A. Brian Albritton announces that U.S. District Judge Harvey E. Schlesinger today sentenced James Charles Jones, Jr. (age 60, of Putnam County) to life in federal prison on federal drug trafficking charges. Jones also previously forfeited the sum of \$87,170 through administrative proceedings.

Jones pleaded guilty on May 27, 2010, to conspiracy to distribute more than 5 kilograms of cocaine, possession with intent to distribute more than 5 kilograms of cocaine, conspiracy to distribute more than 50 grams of cocaine base, possession with intent to distribute more than 50 grams of cocaine base, and maintaining drug-involved premises in Putnam County, Florida.

Jones faced a mandatory life sentence because he had prior serious cocaine trafficking convictions.

U.S. Attorney Albritton stated, "Through this joint effort of federal agencies and the Putnam County Sheriff's Office, a long time drug dealer will now be off the streets for the rest of his life. I commend Sheriff Hardy and his fine deputies for being part of this team effort."

Sheriff Jeff Hardy responded to the news of Jones' sentencing by stating that, "this was a very significant case to this community. We appreciate the partnership that we have with DEA and others that brought this case to a successful conclusion."

According to court documents, during April 2009, Jones and Nicole Marie Hogan lived together at 228 San Jose Avenue in Putnam County. Jones used the residence to conduct his drug trafficking business, which included the storing and distribution of cocaine and marihuana.

On April 17, 2009, federal agents (DEA and ICE) and members of the Putnam County Sheriff's Office learned of plans for a sale of 50 kilograms of cocaine in the Putnam County area. That transaction was to take place at two adjacent residences linked to Jones in East Palatka, 228 San Jose Avenue and 230 San Jose Avenue. Agents and officers searched both residences on April 17, 2009. During their search of 230 San Jose Avenue, agents located the following items, among others:

- Approximately 48 kilograms of cocaine located in a suitcase, a box, and on a table in the living room.
- Two kilogram bricks of cocaine on a counter that had been inspected by the source.
- Ledgers and documents that appeared to reflect previous drug sales.

During their search of 228 San Jose Avenue, agents located the following items, among others:

- A suitcase containing approximately 30 kilograms of cocaine.
- A black foot-locker in the closet of the master bedroom, which contained \$87,170 in currency, pill bottles, plastic bags, and other containers holding approximately 685 grams of cocaine base and approximately 1.5 kilograms of cocaine.

- Four buckets in the closet of the master bedroom containing approximately 7.4 kilograms of marihuana.
- A small safe in the closet of the master bedroom containing approximately 17.5 grams of cocaine base and approximately 1,853.26 grams of cocaine.
- A money counting machine.

Jones was present upon the search team's arrival and advised the officers that he was being paid to provide the location to store the cocaine and to provide counter-surveillance for the contemplated drug transaction.

This case was investigated by the Putnam County Sheriff's Office, the Drug Enforcement Agency, and U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement. It was prosecuted by Assistant United States Attorney Mac D. Heavener, III.